

has done some of the research for us. The latest research, and I have a copy of it, from the Canadian government, confirms that drug prices in Canada on average are 56 percent less than they are in the United States.

The Federal government last year spent \$15 billion on prescription drugs. If we could realize just some of the savings by opening up our markets to competition and bringing our prices into line with world prices, we could have more than enough money to open up the benefit to people who are currently not covered for prescription drugs on Medicare. If we could save 30 percent, 30 percent of \$15 billion, Mr. Speaker, is \$4.5 billion. That would go a long way to making certain that every American had access to affordable prescription drugs.

The time has come to take action. I encourage my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 3240.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE MILITARY FAMILY FOOD STAMP ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, back in March I introduced H.R. 1055. The title is, the Military Family Food Stamp Act. I sent last week a Dear Colleague to my colleagues in the Congress, both Republican and Democrat, asking them to join me in this effort. As of today, we have 91 cosponsors from both sides of the political aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I bring this photograph of this Marine, who is getting ready to deploy for Bosnia, because he represents 60 percent of the families in the United States Armed Forces who are married. He has standing on his feet his daughter Megan, and also in his arms he has his daughter Bridget.

According to a 1995 Pentagon study, we have an estimated 12,000 military families on food stamps. Mr. Speaker, I personally feel that one family on food stamps is one too many. It is unacceptable.

Last week I received a letter from the Fleet Reserve Association endorsing this bill. I would like to read parts to the Members. It is written and signed by the National Executive Secretary, Charles Calkins.

He wrote, and I quote, "The Fleet Reserve Association strongly supports your bill, H.R. 1055, the Military Family Food Stamp Tax Credit Act. The legislation would amend the Internal Revenue Code to allow a \$500 refundable tax credit to certain low-income members of the Uniformed Forces.

"The unfortunate fact that junior enlisted members must rely on food stamps reflects the inadequacy of military compensation. Although there was progress toward closing this significant pay gap between military and civilian pay levels last year, more must be done, and this legislation helps address this reality."

I further quote Charles Calkins. He says, "Petty officers and noncommissioned officers are the backbone of the military services. They deserve fair compensation."

Mr. Speaker, I also want to read from the transcript of the television program 20/20, from June 25 of 1999. The show addresses the subject of our military families on food stamps, and the title of the show was "Front Lines, Food Lines." The reporter was Tom Jarriel.

Tom Jarriel talked to a number of military families during this interview who are struggling to make ends meet. I want to share with the Congress part of the transcript from this show.

I first start by quoting Tom Jarriel: "Captain Elliott Bloxom presents the Pentagon's point of view that while some families are struggling, they are the exception and not the rule."

I further quote Tom Jarriel: "We're talking to people who cannot buy an ice cream for their kids when the truck passes outside their home."

Elliott Bloxom says, and I quote him, "These junior people, we feel their entry wage levels are adequate. They are very competitive with the private sector. We find that there are other complicating factors—oftentimes a larger-than-average size family—which places an additional burden on that service member to manage their finances accordingly."

Now I go back to Tom Jarriel. Tom Jarriel says, "Still, the Pentagon has pushed for an overall 4.8 percent pay raise, up to 10 percent for selected troops—a measure now being considered by Congress. And this would be the largest military pay raise in almost 20 years."

Now back to Elliott Bloxom: "We believe that that amount of money, in addition to other services that we provide, should go a long way towards solving the economic problems of some of our most junior people."

Tom Jarriel: "Not so says Congressman DUNCAN HUNTER," one of our colleagues on the floor of the House. "DUNCAN HUNTER says, 'I think our military people have been betrayed. The pay raise will be 4.8 percent. The services are 13.5 percent below the private sector. We need at least another 8 percent pay increase to close that pay gap.'"

Tom Jarriel: "As an 18-year member of the House Armed Services Committee, HUNTER's district includes many of those on the food lines in California."

"DUNCAN HUNTER," and I quote the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) again, Mr. Speaker, he says,

"These are our best citizens. If we don't take care of our finest citizens, some day we're going to ring the bell for war and the folks aren't going to show up."

Mr. Speaker, I mention that as I close to say that we in America are extremely lucky to have the men and women in uniform who are willing to die for this country. I want to encourage the leadership, both Republican and Democrat, and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, to join me in this effort to say to those in uniform who are on food stamps, we care about you and we are trying to help you.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BARCIA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PRAISING THE FLORIDA GATORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mrs. Thurman) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am really here tonight to say how proud I am of the Florida Gators who played, I believe, their hearts out last night in the final game of the NCAA basketball tournament.

While the University of Florida lost 89 to 76 after a hard fight, they proved to everyone what they are capable of accomplishing. After all, seven members of the young team's ten man rotation are freshmen and sophomores, and their starting line-up blows from the energy of three sophomores and one freshman.

Despite this relative lack of experience, the Gators finished their most successful season in the school's history at 29 wins and only 9 losses."

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Hopefully, all of these fine young men will be back to lead the Gators to victory next season but for now last night's game showed how far the Florida basketball program has come in recent years. The Gators made their first Final Four appearance in 1994, and last night marked the school's first title game appearance ever. No loss can possibly take away from that great accomplishment. This team has spirit and get up and go, and I know they will use this experience to gain even more ground in the future.

Following the game, Florida coach Billy Donovan summed up his team's

loss against Michigan State veteran senior players like this, he said, "You have every reason to be proud of yourselves. You lost to a better team. Let this be a tremendous motivating experience for you."

I would like to encourage all Gator fans to attend the celebration at 7:00 p.m. Thursday night at the O'Connell Center at the University of Florida campus in Gainesville to pay tribute to this fine team. They deserve all the cheers and hurrahs they can get for their remarkable record-setting season, and we in Florida always look forward to saying there will be a next year. Go Gators.

BALANCING THE FEDERAL BUDGET AND PAYING DOWN THE FEDERAL DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOBSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask everybody to sort of hold on to their hats and prepare for a presentation that could be a little boring but very important to everybody's future, to the future of our kids, to the future of our retirees that have already turned past 62 or 65 and maybe gone on Social Security, because what we do in this budget is going to make the decision whether or not future generations have to pay huge amounts of tax to pay for our overspending in this generation, and it is also going to determine whether existing seniors might have their Social Security and Medicare coverage reduced because of the unwillingness of the President and this Congress to face up to some tough decisions on keeping these programs solvent.

Let me start out with what is happening to our Federal budget. Our Federal budget this year is \$1.8 trillion. The debt that we have accumulated so far that we are passing on to our kids now amounts to \$5.7 trillion. That compares to \$1.8 trillion total annual spending.

Who is going to pay back this debt? It looks like every man, woman, and child in the United States owes now approximately \$20,000 to accommodate the debt that has been run up in this country.

Congress has a tendency, a propensity, to spend because usually it is to the political advantage of Members of Congress, it is to the political advantage of the President, to increase spending, to do more things to more people. So, therefore, when taxes became a negative because people did not want to pay their taxes, we started borrowing money. We have kept borrowing money.

Now, for the first time we are starting to reverse that course. Last year we had a balanced budget for the first time in 40 years. This year is going to

be a truly balanced budget, and we are going to start paying down the approximately \$3.6 trillion that is owed to Wall Street.

Let me go back to the total public debt, \$5.7 trillion. Of that \$5.7 trillion, \$3.6 trillion is what we borrow from insurance companies, from banks, from investors, all the Treasury bills that you, I, investment firms, retirement firms decide to buy Treasury bills for. That is \$3.6 trillion.

Then we owe approximately \$1 trillion to the Social Security, Social Security money that over the years we borrowed and used it for other government spending. Then the rest is what we owe the other 112 trust funds that we have in government.

Look at this chart just a second. This is where we are going on reducing the on-budget surplus. The on-budget surplus was a negative and for the first time ever there is going to be a real on-budget surplus. That means over and above Social Security, over and above the rest of the trust funds, we are going to have a real actual surplus and start having a total reduction in the Federal debt.

I think one area that has not been covered as much as it needs to be covered is government waste. If you divide up the \$1.8 trillion that we are spending every year by the 435 Members of the House, 100 members over in the Senate, there still is not enough people in government to keep track of all of that spending.

So what we have found and what we are starting to dig into on the Committee on the Budget is to try to identify some of the significant waste in Federal Government, and believe me there is a lot of waste. Our General Accounting Office now claims that five agencies are not capable of auditing because they do not keep good books.

I would like to call on a colleague that has been active in budget issues. We also share two other committees. We are both on the Committee on Science; we are both on the Committee on Agriculture. The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) has been one of the dedicated individuals looking at, and excuse the word, frugality in government spending, trying to be respectful of the tax dollars that Americans send in for this Chamber to spend.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I must first of all apologize. I made the gentleman from Michigan agree not to talk about what happened in last night's basketball game; but I am willing to at least allow him 2 or 3 minutes to talk about it because I am a huge basketball fan myself, particularly college basketball, and I predicted early in the season that if Mateen Cleaves came back in full

health and strength that they clearly were the most powerful basketball team that I saw play. And I watched them play four or five, maybe six, seven times on television. So I would yield back to the gentleman from Michigan for a little bragging.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT).

Mr. Speaker, anybody that would like to walk down the third floor corridor of the Cannon Building next to room 306, several of my staff are also from Michigan State. We have a Michigan State banner out there. Michigan State played an exceptional game. The Gators were good, but Michigan State prevailed. Congratulations, Michigan State Spartans.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I have to say, being a Big Ten fan from Minnesota, having had a chance to watch them all year, they were not just a great basketball team but they were a great group of young men and really demonstrated what college athletics is all about, and that is pursuing excellence and they did it at every level. They clearly were the best team in the NCAA tournament.

There were a lot of great teams. I congratulate the gentleman and all the Michigan State fans, particularly the players and coaches.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it is a good lesson for us. It is a good lesson for Congress. If we have the will, if we have the fight, if we have the intelligence and if we have the heart, we can do anything we want to and in this case on the budget what we should be doing is making sure that we do not pass on a huge debt to our kids and our grandkids.

We are from farming communities. I am a farmer. It is our tradition that we try to pay down the mortgage; but in this government, what we have been doing is adding to the mortgage that we are going to pass on to our kids; and that is part of our discussion tonight.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Well, pursuing that analogy, and comparing the youngsters who played for Michigan State Spartans and won the national championship, I think there are parallels. Essentially, a number of years ago they set a goal. It was a big goal, and I suspect at the time they decided that one day they were going to win the national championship, if they would have talked about that too much publicly a lot of people would have laughed up their sleeves.

I remember 6 years ago we had an election in this country in 1994, and that is when I and 73 of my colleagues came as freshmen Members of this Congress and changed the leadership of this Congress. For many years, the Congress just, as a matter of fact procedure, would raise the debt ceiling and spend more money than they took in. Some of us decided back in 1994 that we were going to run for Congress to make a difference, and that the idea of leaving our kids a debt which they could never pay was just unthinkable.